



Commission Update

March 2000

Commission Update is the monthly newsletter of the California Children and Families Commission. To offer ideas for future editions, call Nicole Kasabian, Assistant Director for Communications, at (916) 323-2542.

Funding Spotlight – Early Steps To Reading Success

As previously reported, on January 20, 2000, the California Children and Families Commission passed its first statewide funding package, approving nearly \$40 million aimed at addressing an array of education, child care and health-related needs for children prenatal to age five and their families.

Among the programs selected to receive financial assistance is Early Steps To Reading Success. Coordinated through the California Reading and Literature Project, the state's Reading Professional Development Institutes (University of California) and the California Association for the Education of Young Children, this initiative intends to help children become proficient readers by educating child care providers in early literacy techniques, understandings and skills.

The \$5 million provided by the State Commission will enable educators in child care centers and family child care homes throughout the state to participate in courses and receive educational materials in English and Spanish. This initiative, which will also benefit from an additional \$4 million in funding proposed in Governor Davis' budget, builds on the California Reading and Literature Project's 15-year track record of exemplary professional development for K-12 teachers in reading and literacy skills.

Once in place later this year, the Early Steps to Reading Success program will consist of:

- **Training:** Educators can take part in expanded Reading Professional Development Institutes,

as well as through new interactive distance learning classes offered through community colleges, child care resource and referral agencies, schools and other community-based organizations. Five hundred satellite sites will be available.

"Through this innovative, interactive distance learning program, child care providers from all parts of the state will be able to learn important information about early literacy and how to enhance teaching practices and improve literacy outcomes for young children," said Pat Phipps, Executive Director of the California Association for the Education of Young Children. "No matter where they are, expert instruction will be accessible."

- **Materials:** Program participants will receive children's books and other instructional materials to take back to their facilities.
- **Parent Involvement:** Educators who complete the trainings can receive a \$1,000 stipend. They also make a commitment to conduct two-hour early literacy workshops for the parents of their students.

It is estimated that 6,000 early child educators could benefit from the Commission's funding over the next three years. In addition, literacy workshops could reach more than 50,000 parents.

For more information, please contact the CAEYC at (916) 442-4703 or at pphipps@caeys.org.

Upcoming State Commission Meetings

March 16 – Los Angeles
April 20 – San Mateo
May 18 – Location TBD

New State Commission Employees

The State Commission is pleased to introduce three new employees to assist with statewide Prop. 10 efforts. We welcome:

- Patricia Huston – Chief of Government Relations
- Bryan Hobson – Chief of Administrative Services
- Maria Campos-Vergara – Executive Secretary to Dr. Henderson

Technical Assistance Center Update

UPCOMING TELECONFERENCES FOR COUNTY COMMISSION STAFF

The statewide Prop. 10 Technical Assistance (TA) Center continues to hold regular teleconference calls on a variety of topics. Representatives from all counties are invited to participate; to date, more than 40 counties have taken advantage of this service. For a schedule of upcoming topics, please contact the TA Center (see contact information at the end of this article).

WESTERN REGIONAL “WITHIN OUR REACH” CONFERENCE

The Western Regional “Within Our Reach” Conference, hosted by the California Departments of Social Services, Developmental Services and Mental Health, is scheduled for April 9 – 11 at the Los Angeles Airport Marriott Hotel. Two sessions related to Prop. 10 are scheduled:

- *Prop. 10 Progress & Promise (April 10, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.)*
A panel of County Commission representatives will share creative ideas developed from their needs assessment processes, including the development of regional partnerships.
- *Prop. 10: How to Get Involved – Local and State Perspectives (April 10, 3:45 – 5:15 p.m.)*
State and local perspectives will be presented on the public engagement, RFP and collaboration processes involved in Prop. 10 implementation.

Register for the conference at 1-800-858-7743.

RESULTS-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY WORKSHOP

The Placer County Children and Families Commission and the Prop. 10 TA Center are pleased to announce a workshop on results-based accountability. The workshop will be held on Wednesday, April 26, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Auburn. Judy Chynoweth of the Foundation Consortium, in coordination with the Prop. 10 TA Center, will present this workshop, which is directed at agencies and collaboratives interested in seeking Prop. 10 funding. If you would like to attend, please call the TA Center.

INTRODUCING NEW STAFF MEMBERS

The TA Center recently welcomed two new staff members. Vonnie Madigan was hired in February as the TA Center Director. Cynthia Keltner, who joined the staff in January, serves as the liaison between County Commissions requesting assistance and the TA Center’s consultants.

The TA Center, which is made possible by generous grants to the California Center for Health Improvement from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and The California Endowment, can be contacted toll-free at 1-877-TAPROP10 (1-877-827-7671) or via e-mail at Prop10@cchi.org.

State Receives Strategic Plans from Nine Counties

Across California, many County Commissions have been completing their Prop. 10 Strategic Plans and submitting them to the State Commission.

“These counties are moving closer to making Prop. 10 a reality for millions of children,” said Jane Henderson, Executive Director of the State Commission. “I encourage those counties that are currently in the strategic planning or public participation stage to access the Prop. 10 TA Center as a resource for guidance.”

The Prop. 10 TA Center can be contacted toll-free at 1-877-TAPROP10 (1-877-827-7671).

As of March 16, the Commission had received plans from the following counties:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| • Alameda | • Orange |
| • Kern | • Riverside |
| • Kings | • San Diego |
| • Los Angeles | • Santa Barbara |
| • Nevada | |

County Commission Highlight – Santa Clara

Many County Commissions are going to great lengths to ensure their residents are well represented throughout the public participation process. In order to share useful information and helpful strategies with County Commissions, the State Commission offers the following highlight of Santa Clara County.

Before beginning outreach, the Santa Clara Commission conducted a situation analysis. The Commission identified its challenge as reaching out to 1.6 million people speaking over 50 languages in a geographically diverse area, but counted a strong network of community-based organizations (CBOs) and an active media as assets. Using this knowledge, the Commission created a multi-faceted plan for reaching residents.

LOCAL MEETINGS

To enable residents to attend meetings close to home, the county was divided into six geographic regions, with each region hosting a series of three public input meetings. All meetings offered child care and food, and translation was available in five languages – Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Russian and Tagalog. More than 680 people participated in these meetings.

The first meeting in each region focused on the needs and assets of the community; the second established the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. In the final meeting, participants developed strategies for the plan's focus areas. As a "check and balance," Santa Clara invited participants back to a collaborative session to learn what the Commission recorded in each wave of meetings.

COMMUNITY DAYS

To gain more extensive input from large constituencies within the county, "Community Days" were held for the Latino and the Vietnamese populations. Coalitions of ethnic CBOs were awarded mini-grants to undertake all Community Day planning and publicity. Activities and materials were presented in the participants' native languages, and a kids' fair and prizes were

offered to families as incentives. More than 560 parents and 200 children attended Community Days.

OTHER INPUT

- **Focus Groups** – These meetings allowed for in-depth surveying of hard-to-reach constituencies, including the African American faith community, homeless families in shelters and the Russian, Laotian, Ethiopian, Cambodian, Indo-American, Chinese and Filipino communities.
- **Meetings with Local Experts** – Santa Clara tapped the expertise of service providers, key decisionmakers and elected officials.
- **Parent Surveys** – More than 800 residents responded to a needs assessment questionnaire distributed through CBOs.

TIPS FROM SANTA CLARA

Santa Clara offers three suggestions for successful public meetings:

- 1) **PARTNER, PARTNER, PARTNER**
Working with ethnic CBOs allowed all meeting elements to be culturally appropriate – increasing the effectiveness of the outreach and leveraging the credibility, contacts and resources of the CBOs.
- 2) **WORK WITH THE MEDIA AS EXTENSIVELY AS POSSIBLE**
Editorials, meeting announcements and coverage of meetings informed thousands about Prop. 10 activities and opportunities.
- 3) **TIMING**
Hold public meetings on Saturdays to increase turnout among residents.

RAISING AWARENESS

An aggressive community outreach campaign raised awareness of Prop. 10 and the public meetings. First, the Commission mailed meeting announcements to a 4,000-record database, which they built by researching:

- CBOs and public agencies that serve children and families
- Neighborhood associations
- Child care centers
- Existing mailing lists from other organizations (e.g. clients of CBOs or subsidized day care participants)
- People who called the Commission or attended meetings

Secondly, the Commission worked closely with general market and ethnic media (which Santa Clara approached in cooperation with ethnic CBOs).

The Commission expects that the information obtained through this comprehensive outreach program will result in a Strategic Plan that is reflective of the County's diversity.

The Commission Update newsletter regularly highlights the activities of County Commissions. So that we may highlight your successes, email Nicole Kasabian at nkasabian@ccfc.ca.gov and let us know what your Commission has been doing.

March is National Nutrition Month

The State Commission is commemorating National Nutrition Month by emphasizing the importance of nutrition standards in child care programs.

With 60 percent of the nation's children under the age of five in some form of non-parental child care setting, nutrition experts at the American Dietetic Association are recommending that providers offer nutritious foods that keep children free from hunger, promote proper growth, prevent disease and support good health.

Here are a few examples of the Association's recommendations for preschool-aged children:

- Children in eight hours or more of care should be offered at least one meal and two snacks
- Food should be offered at intervals not more than three hours apart
- Parents should be involved in planning the child care center's menu and learning how family meals can complement food served in child care settings
- Furniture and eating utensils should be age-appropriate and developmentally suitable (child-size chairs, for example) to encourage children to accept and enjoy mealtime

"Children's diets affect their physical and cognitive growth – and even transient hunger can impact a child's learning," said Sally Livingston of the Nutrition Education and Training Section, Nutrition Services Division of the California Department of Education. This division oversees the Child Care Food Program. "National Nutrition Month is an excellent opportunity to recognize the important role families and child care providers play in establishing healthy eating patterns that last a lifetime."

These and other helpful tips provide guidance to health care practitioners, child care providers, caregivers and parents. Following are resources for additional information about meeting the nutritional needs of young children:

- American Dietetic Association, www.eatright.org
- California Department of Education Nutrition Services, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/cyfsbranch/cnfddiv/index.htm>
- California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), 1-888-WIC-WORKS or www.dhs.ca.gov/pcfh/wic/index.htm *(Please note that a county-by-county list of WIC coordinators will be available on this website at the end of the month.)*

Commission Update is published by the California Children and Families Commission

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